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CINQUE TERRE AND THE ITALIAN RIVIERA

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hike the Cinque Terre's spectacular coastline trails through five brightly colored cliff side villages, rich in nature, history, and traditional ways of life
- Discover medieval castles and fortresses, tiny fishing ports, and bustling harbors in the nearby picturesque seaside towns of Camogli, Levanto, and Portovenere
- See the charming coastal towns from the sea
- Taste the fresh flavors, local wines, and traditional foods of this area
- Enjoy a winery tour and Italian cooking class

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Florence, Italy
Activities:	Hiking
Arrive:	Meet in the lobby of Hotel Cellai at 1pm on Day 1
Depart:	Depart from Pisa anytime after 1pm on the last day

Trip Overview

The Cinque Terre is a collection of five colorful towns perched on steep cliffs overlooking the Mediterranean, known as the Italian Riviera. After meeting in Florence, we will explore some of its culture and food before traveling to Camogli, a lovely coastal town on the Ligurian Coast. We will head to the northernmost town in Cinque Terre, Monterosso al Mare, where we'll hike along paths that wind through hundred-year-old terraces and charming villages. When not hiking along ancient stone paths, we will sample local wines and other locally produced specialties, relax in romantic outdoor cafes, and take a dip in the Ligurian sea. During the trip we will visit all five towns along the Cinque Terre: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Coniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. Maximum group size: 14

Rating

This trip is designed for women who want to combine hiking between the villages of Cinque Terre and the surrounding area known as the Italian Riviera, with time to soak up Italian culture. Cinque Terre is perched on high and dramatic sea cliffs: the majority of paths go up and down the sides of cliffs, often on stairs and paths that can be narrow. In order to do all of the hikes listed here, women should be in very good physical condition and able to hike for five to six hours a day which is why we give it a rating of 4. However, hiking can sometimes be shortened or foregone altogether as an excellent rail system links all five towns. Rating: 1 2 [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#) 5

What's Included

- An English-speaking local Italian guide and an AGC guide (If there are fewer than 8 on the trip, there will not be an AGC guide)
- Nine nights double occupancy lodging with ensuite bathrooms
- All meals from dinner on the first day to breakfast on the last with the exception of 1 dinner & 1 lunch
- Ground transportation within Italy other than the initial Florence airport transfer to the hotel in Florence
- A cooking class and a wine-tasting

Not included: Travel to Florence and from Pisa, airport transfer in Florence, alcoholic beverages, 1 dinner, 1 lunch, guide gratuities, and travel insurance

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Meet in Florence by 1.p.m. After introductions, we will start our week with a walking tour of the major landmarks in Florence, learning about the history and culture from our local Florentine guide. If you can't arrive until later, you can meet us at the hotel at 5 p.m. where we'll start getting acquainted before going out for our first dinner together.

Overnight: Florence, at Hotel Cellai (D)

DAY 2

Today we will explore another side of Florence today with a culinary tour. We'll sample some of Italy's best- known delights as we stop at different shops to taste everything from antipasti to dessert before stopping for lunch.

Well-fed, we will say good-bye to Florence, and embark on a three-hour drive to the lovely town of Camogli. Camogli, situated on the Ligurian Coast just north of Cinque Terre National Park, is known for lively streets, cafes, restaurants, and boutiques. We will have time to swim or explore the town and visit Castel Dragone near the harbor.

Driving: 3 hours in private van. Walking: 2 miles. Overnight: Camogli at Hotel Casmona (B,L,D)

DAY 3

After breakfast, we start walking from our hotel and climb across the Portofino Peninsula with spectacular views of the sea and the Portofino Marine Reserve. We'll have lunch along the way at "Agriturifugio Mulino", a farmhouse restaurant, and then hike down to the remote 13th century Abbey of San Fruttuoso. Located in a beautiful small bay, it is accessible only by foot or boat. We will catch a boat ride back to Camogli, stopping along the way in Portofino. You'll see why the rich and famous flock to this gorgeous town; its harbor is filled with yachts and its cliff-side coast is lined with impressive villas.

Hiking: Approximately 4.5 -5 hours, 5.4 miles with steep rocky up and downhill trail sections. Overnight: Camogli (B,L,D)

DAY 4

After breakfast we drive to Monterosso al Mare, the northernmost village in the Cinque Terre and our home for the next four nights. After dropping our luggage at the hotel, we will walk through town and visit the Capuchin Church and Hilltop Cemetery in a ruined castle. We'll finish our walk at the Buranco organic farm for wine tasting and lunch. After lunch you can relax, swim, shop or hike up to the Madonna del Soviore Monastery, a retreat above the hustle of village life.

Hiking: about 6 miles of steep up and down cobbled trail and rural road. Overnight: Monterosso al Mare at Hotel Marina (B,L,D)

DAY 5

A short train ride brings us to the village of Levanto, once a walled town and major stronghold of the Genoese. We leave Levanto on foot and walk across the peninsula past Punta Mesco with views over Levanto's medieval walls and tiled roofs, a lovely wooded area, and eventually the magnificent stretch of the Cinque Terre coast. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch and amazing views at Punta Mesco before returning to Monterosso. The afternoon is yours to do as you like, before we meet again in time for a cooking class to discover the secrets of Pesto (which originated here) and other Italian specialities. For dinner we'll feast on the fruits of our labor.

Hiking: about 4 hours, 5 miles steep up and down a combination of trail, rocky steps and rural road. Overnight: Monterosso al Mare (B,L,D)

DAY 6

Today we walk from our hotel up past agricultural terraces and then down to Vernazza, a village so charming, it's one of the most photographed in the Cinque Terre. After exploring the shops and narrow pedestrian streets, we'll continue on to Corniglia, a village perched on cliffs high above the sea. (Note: If you feel like taking a day off from hiking, you can do part of the itinerary by train today and tomorrow.) We will enjoy lunch at a terrace restaurant and then take the train back to Monterosso. Dinner is on your own tonight to enjoy any of the wonderful restaurants in Monterosso.

Hiking: 3.5 hours, 4.5 miles total: 1.5 hours, 2 miles of steep ups and downs to Vernazza, and 2 hours, 2.5 miles, to Corniglia. Overnight: Monterosso al Mare (B,L)

DAY 7

After a delicious breakfast, we take the train back to Corniglia to continue our Cinque Terre village walks. Our hike takes us up and along the high route to Manarola with stunning views over the Cinque Terre and through the ancient hamlet of Volastra for lunch. We then hike down to the seaside village of Manarola where we have time to look around town, and perhaps indulge in a gelato before taking the train back to our hotel in Monterosso and dinner at the Ancora della Tortuga.

Hiking: About 5 miles of long steep trail and stone stairs, both up and down and a trail section with exposure to a vertical drop. Overnight: Monterosso al Mare (B,D)

DAY 8

This morning we take the train to the 5th village in the Cinque Terre, Riomaggiore. Our hike is mostly uphill past terraced fields and splendid forests of pine, chestnut, and cork trees. We will enjoy more breathtaking views of the coast throughout the morning and lunch in the hamlet of Campiglia, where we picnic on a terrace of a small "Alimentari" shop. Then we transfer by van to Portovenere. We'll check into our hotel (our luggage was transferred separately) and have some free time to explore the cobbled streets of this charming seaside town. Here, spectacular cliffs rise above the crystal blue waters of the Mediterranean in a setting so beautiful that Byron, Shelley and D.H. Lawrence (among others) wrote here: thus, the Gulf of Poets was named.

Hiking: about 6.2 miles, mostly long, gradual uphill on trails with some stone steps. Train ride: about 15 minutes. Driving: 20 minutes. Overnight: Portovenere at Hotel Paradiso (B,L,D)

DAY 9

A short boat ride this morning takes us through the harbor to the nearby island of Palmaria. This island has been the guardian of Portovenere for centuries and still has remnants of Napoleon-era forts. We walk around the island with views of the colorful buildings perched on the promontory of Portovenere and the tiny nearby island of Tino. Our path travels through a distinct native ecosystem referred to as Mediterranean Macchia, with plants, such as arbutus, broom, and myrtle, adapted to the dry, harsh heat and heavy seasonal rains. We return to Portovenere mid-day and have some free time before dinner to explore the 16th-century Genovese naval fortress that once protected Portovenere from marauding corsair pirates, walk by the "Poet's Grotto", or do some last shopping in the many charming boutiques. Tonight, we'll enjoy our last Italian feast together.

Boat: 10 minutes each way. Hiking: 3 miles, 2.5 hours on rocky trails and pathways with short, steep sections. Overnight: Porto Venere (B,L,D)

DAY 10

After our last shared breakfast, we will pack up and transfer in our private van to the Pisa International Airport. We'll arrive by noon and you can plan flights out after 1 p.m. (B)

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

You can fly into Florence (FLR) and taxi to the meeting place. There is also an airport shuttle that runs between the airport and the Florence train stations. The main train station is a short cab ride, bus or walk to the hotel. Alternatively, you can fly into Pisa (the trip ends in Pisa). At the airport there is a Pisa train stop which will take you to the Pisa main train station where you can transfer to a train to Florence.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

Accommodations

All lodging has been chosen for its comfort, convenience, and welcoming staff. We will be staying in double occupancy rooms with ensuite bathrooms at the following 3* hotels (or similar):

- Florence at Hotel Cellai
- Camogli at Hotel Camgliese
- Monterosso al Mare at Hotel Marina
- Portovenere at Hotel Paradiso

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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